



Centennial Pork Sliders

SAVORY 🐷 | CITRUSY 🍊 | TANGY ✨ | TENDER 🍴

A hundred years of history.
One little sandwich.

A Flower with a Passport

Before it became San Francisco's official flower, the dahlia had already done some traveling.

In 1926, San Francisco's Board of Supervisors passed a resolution officially naming the dahlia the city's flower. Along with giving it the title, the resolution told its story: from its roots in Mexico through Spain, France, and England, before finding a home in San Francisco.

A hundred years later, the centennial celebration honored both the flower and the community of caretakers who keep it blooming.

That journey sounded like a pretty good starting point for lunch.

The Journey, on a Roll

That journey became a flavor map: guajillo chiles for Mexico, orange and Spanish paprika for Spain, champagne vinegar for France, and Colman's mustard powder for England.

Not a historical recipe. Just a way of telling the story through food.

Those flavors come together in an orange-guajillo sauce for slow-roasted, GB-seasoned pork, tucked into a Hawaiian roll with pickled red onions. Rich pork, fruity chile, a little sweetness, and enough tang to keep things interesting.

A hundred years of history is a lot to fit into a little sandwich. We gave it a shot.

Grandpa Bill's Lab Notes

Grandpa Bill didn't cook by recipes—he cooked by paying attention. He watched how food reacted to heat, salt, and time, and he trusted his senses more than instructions. These notes exist to capture that way of cooking: not as rules to follow, but as observations worth remembering.

For these sliders, the pork needs patience and the sauce needs balance. Tenderness tells you when the roast is ready; tasting tells you when the orange, chile, vinegar, and mustard are getting along. Neither needs constant fussing. Just attention at the right moments.

The Lab Notes that follow aren't meant to be exhaustive or prescriptive. They're here to highlight the moments that matter—the parts of the process where slowing down a little, or doing less on purpose, leads to better food and a calmer cook.

Grandpa Bill's Lab Notes

On Low and Slow

Pork shoulder's connective tissue needs time to soften into gelatin. That's how a tough cut becomes tender, pull-apart pork. The thermometer helps, but tenderness gets the final vote. If you're wrestling it, keep cooking.

On Keeping the Good Stuff

The roasting juices have flavor worth keeping. Fold some back into the pulled pork after skimming off excess fat. Think juicy, not swimming. Taste before adding more salt—the rub and drippings have already been doing their jobs.

On Toasting, Not Torching

Toasting wakes up the guajillos' flavor. Scorching brings bitterness that's tough to undo. Follow your nose: fragrant is good; acrid is your cue to start over.

On Finding the Balance

The softened chiles give the sauce body; the orange juice doesn't need to become syrup. Sweetness varies between juices, and mustard can speak loudly. Adjust gradually, then taste the sauce on the pork. That's where it has to work.

Ingredients

Makes approximately 8 sliders | Serves 4 at 2 each

Prep: about 25 min | Build: several hours roasting

Finish: about 30 min, including resting | Mostly hands-off

Meat

- 2 lb boneless pork shoulder

Produce

- 1 medium red onion
- 1 orange, for ½ tsp finely grated zest
- 1 garlic clove

Bakery

- 8 Hawaiian sweet rolls

Dried Chiles & Seasonings

- 2 dried guajillo chiles
- 20 g Grandpa Bill's Sweet & Spicy seasoning
- ½ tsp smoked sweet Spanish paprika
- ½ tsp Colman's mustard powder
- Fine pink Himalayan salt, optional, to taste

Bottled & Pantry

- 4 fl oz orange juice (½ cup)
- 4½ fl oz champagne vinegar (½ cup + 1 tbsp), divided
- Up to 1 tbsp agave
- 1 tbsp sugar

From the Tap

- ½ cup water for brine; more for soaking and blending

Extra pickles? Use them in Back to the Bay Potato Salad.

Prep · Build · Finish

Prep

Season: Pat pork dry. Rub with GB Sweet & Spicy and optional salt. Cover and refrigerate overnight if time allows.

Set up: Preheat oven to 275°F. Place pork fat-side up in a roasting pan; cover tightly with a lid or foil.

Slice and measure: Thinly slice onion into half-moons. Peel garlic, grate ½ tsp orange zest, and measure remaining ingredients.

Build

Roast: Cook covered until probe-tender, approximately 195–205°F internally. Check several spots in the thickest part, avoiding large fat pockets.

Pickle: Heat ½ cup vinegar, ½ cup water, sugar, and salt to taste until dissolved. Pour over onions in a heatproof container; press into brine. Cool briefly, then refrigerate.

Toast and soak: Stem and deseed guajillos. Toast briefly in a dry skillet over medium heat until fragrant. Cover with hot water; soak 15–20 minutes. Drain and cool enough for your blender.

Blend: Blend guajillos, orange juice, garlic, and paprika until smooth, adding fresh water if needed.

Simmer and season: Simmer sauce gently for 10–15 minutes, stirring. Mix mustard with a little cool water; stir in with zest. Gradually add remaining 1 tbsp vinegar, agave, and salt to taste.

Finish

Rest and pull: Rest pork 20–30 minutes. Pull into strands; remove large pieces of unrendered fat.

Dress: Skim excess fat from roasting juices. Fold some juice into pork, then toss with warm sauce. Taste and adjust.

Assemble: Split rolls with a serrated knife. Fill with pork and well-drained pickled onions. Serve warm.